

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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MARKEY LEADS PUSH IN THE HOUSE FOR MORE ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH AND PREVENTION DOLLARS

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-Malden) announced today that he has gathered the support of 58 of his House colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, and sent to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education a letter requesting an appropriation of \$449 million for Alzheimer's Disease research and prevention. This represents a \$100 million increase over the fiscal year 1998 appropriation for Alzheimer's Disease.

Markey said, "Congress must move swiftly and decisively to focus research dollars on Alzheimer's Disease - the costs of treating the disease and caring for it's victims is going to explode as the 'baby boom generation' grows older. We must invest now in research which will be devoted to finding a cure for Alzheimer's and to help people recognize the warning signs and equip them with the resources they need to prevent the disease if and when possible."

In their letter, Rep. Markey and his colleagues wrote to Rep. John Porter and Rep. David Obey, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee and noted that, "Alzheimer's Disease is a degenerative dementia disorder that attacks the brain and results in impaired memory, thinking and behavior. The disease affects over 4 million people nationwide and will affect as many as 14 million by 2050. Alzheimer's patients will symptomatically lose ability to perform routine tasks, and suffer impaired judgment, personality change and loss of language and communication skills. Patients may live anywhere from 3 to 20 years from the time symptoms first appear."

Markey said, "The real tragedy of the at-home Alzheimer's patient is that, according to the Alzheimer's Association, in addition to the \$12,500 per year in out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the friends and families of these patients, the typical family caregiver is in her 70s and has two chronic health problems. The stress of taking care of their loved ones results in one-third of these family caregivers dying before the death of the Alzheimer's patients for whom they are caring. I am pleased that so many of my colleagues have joined me in asking that we appropriate an additional \$100 million to help the patients and caregivers so profoundly affected by Alzheimer's Disease, and I am hopeful that Representatives Porter and Obey look favorably upon our request."

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